Comforter In The Midst Of Trouble

I. WELCOME, 15 mins.
Plan one to two icebreakers for the purpose of mixing around and getting group participation or getting acquainted.

II. WORSHIP, 20 mins.
Prayerfully choose a few songs to lead people into God’s presence. During this time, cell leaders will encourage cell members to listen to the Holy Spirit and release the words of strengthening, encouragement, and comfort they have received for the cell group, the church and nations. Upon each word shared, the cell leader will lead members by thanking and praising God for His promise and/or praying aloud together for the needs, etc.

During this time, the cell leader will also lead the group to pray aloud for: (1) the mission organization or daughter church that the cell group adopts (2) the church ministry needs (3) blessings for new comers, the sick.

MISSION ORGANIZATION: __________________, their needs: __________________
(Please contact the church if you don’t know the needs of the mission organization.)

CHURCH MINISTRY: __________________, their needs: __________________

III. WORD, 45 mins.
A. Sharing from last Sunday’s message.
1. What is the main message from last Sunday sermon? What did God say to you from the message?
2. How would you respond to the message? What action will you take after listening to the message?

B. Discussion Topic: “Comforter in the Mist of Trouble”

Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 1:1-14 (Please take turns to read the passage.)
Memory Verse: He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us. (2 Corinthians 1:4 NLT)

In 1 Corinthians, Paul severely chastised the church in Corinth for the sins committed. As a result, the church repented. Hence in 2 Corinthians, Paul strived to entreat for comfort for the Corinthian church. The letter is filled with love and encouragement for the believers so that they can turn away from corruption and return back to the Truth.

Faced with a turbulent environment, how should we, as children of God, experience the comfort of the Lord in order to stand firmly again when we encounter various adversities?

1. We need to know that true comfort comes from God and that afflictions are not from Him (2 Corinthians 1:1-3):
   1. Affliction is the result brought about by sins:
      a. Indirect sins: Sins that are passed down from our ancestor Adam: selfishness, griping, bitterness, resentment, jealousy etc. Afflictions caused by sins of man, for example: the earth is cursed (Genesis 3:17); First murder of mankind, the break of relationship between people (Genesis 4:8); environmental changes and natural disasters (earthquake in Genesis 4:11),…etc.
      b. Direct sins: Tickets/accidents from not following traffic rules. Indiscriminate tillage→soil erosion→famine. Disobedient to the laws of nature, not wearing enough clothing and catching cold, got what one asked for, being a busy body (1 Peter 4:15).
   2. Accusations and deceptions of Satan: An important job for Satan is the destruction of all of your relationships. This includes relationships between you and God, people, events, and things. His goal is to put you into dire straits: destroy you (John 10:10), make accusation against you (Revelations 12:10), devour you (1 Peter 5:8), deceive you (John 8:44), …etc.
   3. Suffer for the Lord: This includes suffering for Christ and church. This type of suffering is noted by the Lord and is most valuable. This is also the type that the Lord will especially comfort us. Jesus suffered and set the example for us (1 Peter 2:21). Those that suffer for Him will also be glorified with Him (Romans 8:17). For example, God was with the three friends of Daniel when they were in the blazing furnace (suffering) (Please see Daniel 3).

2. Lord Jesus is the comforter when we are in the midst of trouble (2 Corinthians 1:4-11):
   1. Real grace and peace are from God and Christ (2 Corinthians 1:2): real peace is from grace. Being born again is the starting point of grace.

When we are in the midst of troubles, what we need the most is the grace of the comfort of God. If we have the grace of God, our hearts will naturally have the indescribable joy and peace! Hence we should not worry nor fear in the midst of troubles (John 14:27). Instead we should put our hope in God (Psalms 42:5).

2. God is more than willing to comfort you in the midst of various troubles (2 Corinthians 1:3-5): Why can God comfort you? Because He is a mighty God (Deuteronomy 10:17). He knows you and He knows how to comfort you (John 6:6). He is glad to generously give wisdom and comfort to you (James 1:5). Moreover, God can comfort you in all types of troubles, not just one or two types.

3. Lord wants you to be the comforter to those in trouble (2 Corinthians 1:6-7): The comfort of the Lord is not only just to help you to overcome the dire circumstances. He also wants you to comfort those who are confounded and are unsure of how to proceed in the midst of trouble once you are out of it so that those people will not be discouraged and will continue to hope in God.

3. The attitude to have in the midst of adversities (2 Corinthians 1:8-14):
   1. Determine why you are in it (2 Corinthians 1:5): If we are suffering for Christ, we will surely be comforted by Christ. If we are suffering because of our own sin, we need to repent to Him (1 John 1:9) and turn away from the sin (Ezekiel 3:19).
   2. Concentrate on relying on God (2 Corinthians 1:8-11): Paul’s precious experience is our example! For every suffering he received, he gained additional comforting from the Lord. In addition the comforting from the Lord always exceeded the suffering. If in doubt about this, please count verses 3-7 and you will see the answer!
   3. Relying on God and boast to the enemy (2 Corinthians 1:12-14):
      a. Boast to the enemy because of the grace of God (2 Corinthians 1:12-13): Grace is a gift from God. It is not something that you have to earn or you deserve. Comfort in the midst of adversity is especially a great grace to overcome the enemy and you are the witness to the grace of God.
      b. Boast to the enemy because of the grace of God on brothers and sisters (2 Corinthians 1:14): We need to thank God for what He did on our brothers and sisters. We should never be jealous or feel unfair about it. Otherwise we will have fallen for the deception of the enemy!

Discussion Questions:
1. What adversities have you faced? How did you feel then? What did you need the most? How did you go through it?
2. Paul experienced countless adversities in his life. What do you think is the secret to his victories?
3. Why does God allow troubles to come upon us? What is the meaning of trouble to you?
4. Have you experienced God’s comfort in the midst of trouble? Please share briefly.
5. How can we live out glorious testimony in the midst of adversities?
6. How can you help those who are in trouble? Do you have a concrete testimony?
7. Cell group leader please lead the members that have experienced the comforting from the Lord to thank the Lord! And please pray for the brothers and sisters that are still in adversities. Lastly please use 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 to proclaim loudly the befalling of the comfort of the Lord to encourage one another.

Prayer:
The God that bestows every comfort, we thank You and we praise You! Because You have every kind of comfort, we entreat that You release them in our hearts so that we can experience them and can also bring the hope of salvation that we can receive in the midst of adversities to those around us so that we can become the vessels to comfort others. Thank You and in Lord Jesus’ name we pray, amen!

IV. WORK (Pray for each other), 10 mins.

Please break into group of 2 or 3 to pray for each other’s needs.